LOCAL LONG RANGE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMING

A Suggested Procedure for the Development of Long Range Public Improvements

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LATROBE HALL
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
BALTIMORE 18, MARYLAND

WILLIAM L. GALVIN
ROBERT H. RILEY
THOMAS B. SYMONS
EZRA B. WHITMAN
ABEL WOLMAN
Chairman

I. ALVIN PASAREW
Director

June 1, 1944.

MEMORANDUM

To Public Officials of Local Governments:

Throughout the entire country, state, county and local governmental units are taking these times in which no construction work is possible, as an opportunity to prepare carefully for the future.

The Maryland Srate Planning Commission urges you to plan a construction program for your community. In the past several years maintenance has been cut to a minimum and new construction halted. Buildings and equipment are becoming obsolete and require replacement and enlargement. Now is the time to prepare for the days when improvements can once more be made. A program prepared now can serve several purposes:

1. It will provide for the much needed improvements and expansion.

2. It will help to relieve the local unemployment problem which will result from demobilization of the armed forces and the diminishing of war industries.

3. It will give a community a clearer picture of what can be expected of the future, both as to growth and costs.

I need not emphasize how valuable such a program can be. You will recall when construction in public works was desired during the recent depression, those communities which had definite plans were enabled to make greater progress, which resulted in more lasting benefits than where there was no program.

Furthermore, I must emphasize that such worth-while programs can come only from the men who are closest to the problem, needs and abilities of the communities.

May I add that the Maryland State Planning Commission stands ready to cooperate with you. The enclosed pamphlet suggests a form of procedure which may be followed.

Very truly yours,

Abel Wolman

ABEL WOLMAN, *Chairman.*

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LONG RANGE PUBLIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

This pamphlet and the accompanying forms have been prepared by the Maryland State Planning Commission to help local communities develop a long-range public works program.

Governmental units, Federal, State, county and smaller sub-divisions are being urged to prepare post-war public works programs now. These public works programs will do two things. First, they will provide for needed public improvements; and second, they will help give employment to returning members of the armed forces and war industry workers no longer needed. Prompt action is necessary. If unemployment is to be relieved in the period immediately following the war, communities must know what they want done and have the plans and specifications ready.

Work along these lines has already been started. For the State of Maryland a long-range state capital improvements program has already been prepared. The Commission on Post-War Reconstruction and Development of Maryland has recommended to the Board of Public Works that engineers and architects be employed to prepare plans and specifications for individual projects. Already the Board has approved these recommendations for projects totalling $9,445,954. Similarly the Maryland State Roads Commission's program for post-war highway construction totalling $61,420,530 is being translated into plans and specifications.

The City of Baltimore likewise is working on a long-term development program. Plans and specifications for post-war projects estimated to cost $52,436,600 are now being prepared.

These programs are not made up of unrelated projects all independent of each other. As a matter of fact each project must fit into the overall picture. Not only is this true but before the projects can be included in a program the resulting financial obligations must also be studied. These projects must be paid for. They must also be supported and maintained once they are built. A community must plan to meet these financial responsibilities as well as to plan to construct the improvement. When the amount of money that can be spent for construction and annual upkeep is determined, some idea will be obtained of the rate at which the construction can be completed. Obviously the most important needs are given first priority.

Irrespective of the size of the political unit considering post-war public works, some advance planning and programming are essential. For the most part local governments can do

this for themselves. They know what is needed most and they know what they can afford. Outside technical assistance will probably be needed to draw up detailed plans and specifications, but these will be made up only when the general needs have first been determined.

The local public officials or civic groups must recognize that this programming is their responsibility. They must either prepare the program themselves or closely direct its preparation if it is to be done effectively. A consultant can help them in arranging details but no outsider can be expected to know the local problems and abilities as well as the local officials. Local governments have, in some instances, created advisory bodies composed of private citizens of the community to assist in the development of their programs.

Unless this kind of study is made there will be danger of a community accepting a hastily conceived project which, in a few years, will prove too small, too large, in the wrong place or too expensive to keep up. The basic idea of long-range planning is to avoid this type of waste.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING PROGRAMS

The Maryland State Planning Commission has made a number of these studies and assisted in making others. Because of this experience it suggests a method of approach which may be helpful in preparing a long-range community program. This method is not involved and can be developed by the governing body, aided by its staff members, at no extra expense.

The data to be obtained consist of

(1) A study of the community's population trends and characteristics.

(2) A simple analysis of the community's financial status.

(3) A statement of what the community's needs or improvements should be over a six to ten year period.

(4) The order in which the improvements should be made.

(5) Some provision by which the improvements can be financed.

In order to have this information arranged for easy reading and studying, suggested forms are included in this pamphlet.

The items to be tabulated on the forms are

Form 1. Population trends, from 1920 to present time. This will indicate the rate at which the population has grown and form a basis for estimating the population to be expected in the next ten years. It is important that new construction be made big enough to accommodate future population growth.

Form 2. Financial data concerning the assessed valuation of the community for taxing purposes; the past tax rates, the revenue and bonded indebtedness. This information is necessary in order to estimate what the community can afford to build and to maintain after building.

Form 3. Public works expenditures for the past ten years will show what the community has been able to build. This will help to indicate what is needed and at what rate the community can afford to spend money.

Form 4. The officials should list what they have approved as the six year improvement program. This should furnish the following information:

1. The order in which the projects should be constructed in each of the six years.
2. The status of the plans for the individual projects.
3. The increase or decrease in the cost of operation and maintenance resulting from the construction of each individual project.

In addition to the above information the community should prepare a financial program to provide for the cost of the capital improvements.

The Maryland State Planning Commission will answer any inquiry regarding this program and will be glad to cooperate in the development of program.

Form 1

POPULATION TRENDS

	U. S. Census			Estimated	
	1920	1930	1940	1943	1950
White					
Colored					
Totals					

Form 2

FINANCIAL DATA

Year	Assessable Base	Tax Rate	Revenue	Bonded Indebtedness
1938				
1939				
1940				
1941				
1942				
1943				

Form 3

PUBLIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS EXPENDITURES
1934-1943

(Exclusive of Operation Costs)

TYPE OF PROJECT	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
TOTALS										

Form 4

LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM
POST-WAR YEARS

List Projects in Order of Approved Priority of Construction:

First Post-War Year

Project	ESTIMATED COST			*Status of Plans
	Construction	Maintenance (Increase+	Operation Decrease—)	

Second Post-War Year

Third Post-War Year

Fourth Post-War Year

Fifth Post-War Year

Sixth Post-War Year

*Legend for Status of Plans:

(A) Preliminary plans begun
(B) Preliminary plans completed
(C) Final plans begun
(D) Final plans completed

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